



Wisconsin Elections Commission

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DATE: January 7, 2020

TO: Wisconsin County Clerks
Wisconsin Municipal Clerks
City of Milwaukee Elections Commission
Milwaukee County Elections Commission

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SUBJECT: State Your Name and Address Requirement Changes and Polling Place Accessibility

Accommodation for the State Your Name and Address Requirement

The 2019 Wisconsin Act 48 was signed into law on November 22, 2019 amending the requirement for a voter to state their name and address if they are unable to do so. The law allows voters to have poll workers or assistants of their choosing state their name and address on their behalf prior to receiving a ballot. Poll workers or assistants may read the name and address directly from the poll book or the photo ID provided by the voter. Voters can also provide their information in writing to poll workers or assistants. This addition to state law confirms that an accommodation is required in these situations and all poll workers should be informed of this change. The WEC is updating training materials to include instructions on this process.

Accessibility Report

The Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) published the statutorily-required report on polling place accessibility in November of 2019.

The goal of this biennial report is to provide information regarding the accessibility of Wisconsin polling places. The report analyzes data from the WEC polling place audit program and provides updates on additional agency efforts designed to ensure access to the polls. These efforts include providing training and outreach materials that increase both the awareness of accessible voting options and the likelihood that these options are offered and administered in a uniform manner statewide. The polling place audit program focuses on physical accessibility of polling places, but the report also discusses other aspects of accessibility, including an overview of the work done by the WEC Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Key takeaways from the report include:

- In 2016, there were 2,506 problems identified through audits at 366 polling places for an average of 6.85 problems per polling place. Whereas in 2018-19 there were 345 problems at 78 audited polling places for an average of 4.42 problems per polling place. This downward trend is promising, but audit data only covers a portion of all polling places

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and, therefore, is unable to fully capture the experience of elderly voters and voters with disabilities.

- The Accessibility Advisory Committee, with members from advocacy groups representing the elderly and disability community, continues its strong partnership with the WEC. Their efforts have resulted in improved training and outreach materials and legislative changes to improve the accessibility of voting.
- Plans of Actions from clerks to resolve issues raised during polling place audits show that municipalities are making changes to improve accessibility. The Plans of Action indicated clerks replaced inaccessible pathways, added accessible door hardware, and cleared all obstacles from interior and exterior pathways.
- Many of the problems identified were found in the setup of the voting area.
- From 2016-2019, the WEC distributed 804 supplies to clerks, such as signage, cones, doorbells, page magnifiers, and signature guides. The supply program continues to support polling place accessibility at no cost to clerks.
- Reviewing the audit data allowed WEC staff to adjust existing training protocol and develop additional training resources to support accessibility.

To review the full accessibility report, please go to <https://elections.wi.gov/node/6631>.

Making Polling Places Accessible Prior to the 2020 Elections

To prepare for the high-turnout 2020 election cycle, it is important to ensure your polling places are accessible. Accessibility is not only important for voter enfranchisement but is also required by law. All polling places should be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain accessible and that no problems have developed in between elections. To help you prepare your polling places for 2020, the Wisconsin Elections Commission put together a variety of materials that are focused on accessibility.

[Polling Place Set-up Guide](#)

The polling place set-up guide outlines basic information for setting up a polling place to allow voters with disabilities to participate in the election process without necessary assistance. The guide reviews the five polling place zones with tips to make them accessible.

[Election Day Accessibility Checklist](#)

The election day accessibility checklist was created by Disability Rights Wisconsin to allow an election inspector to review the polling place quickly on election day to ensure that it is accessible. The checklist reviews various areas of the polling place, as well as election inspector interactions with voters.

[Quick Fix Guide](#)

The quick fix guide highlights common accessibility issues and easy and/or low-cost ways to eliminate barriers. This is a great tool to use to supplement the polling place set-up guide and the election day accessibility checklist.

The Polling Place Audit Program

Our agency created the polling place audit program in 2009 with the intention to send auditors to polling places across the state to conduct surveys using questions related to American with Disabilities Act standards. The survey is organized into five distinct polling place zones: parking, pathways, accessible entrance, interior routes, and voting area. Each question is ranked by high, medium or low severity. After the audit, the WEC sends clerks the results of their audits and, if necessary, options to improve their polling place through a Plan of Action.

Auditors will continue to visit polling places at each 2020 election. To conduct an audit, auditors will introduce themselves to the chief inspector at the polling place and hand them a letter outlining the audit process. Auditors are not observers and are not required to sign in as observers. The process typically takes between 20 and 60 minutes and will not disrupt the voting process. Auditors will examine each polling place zone and may need to see certain parts of the voting equipment. They may take pictures of the polling place, but these photos will not include any voters or ballots.

The Supply Program

Clerks may order accessibility supplies such as signage, signature guides, and cones from the WEC Supply Program free of charge. If the order is not in response to an audit, the clerk should provide a short description of the need for the supplies. Please email all supply requests to elections@wi.gov.

To view a complete list of supplies or to order supplies, go to elections.wi.gov/audit-program-summary.

The Polling Place Accessibility Survey

If a municipality is moving any polling places to new locations, the clerk must conduct a Polling Place Accessibility Survey. The survey asks the same questions as the polling place audit program and ensures that each area of the polling place is accessible for voters.

You can find the Polling Place Accessibility Survey at <https://elections.wi.gov/clerks/guidance/accessibility/new-polling-place>. Complete surveys should be sent to elections@wi.gov.

Top 5 most common problems and how to fix them

1. Required notices and postings were either not posted or not posted in the required 18-point font.

Solution: Ensure that all required notices are posting at the polling place in at least 18-point font.

The required notices are:

1. Type B Information to Electors
2. For elections with referenda, Type C Notice of Referendum
3. Type D Polling Place Hours and Locations

4. Two samples of each ballot type (in a color other than white)
5. Election Fraud Notice (EL-111)
6. For the Partisan Primary, Notice of Crossover Voting (EL-112, paper ballots; EL-112m, electronic voting equipment)
7. Notice of Overvote (EL-113)
8. For the Presidential Preference, Notice of Crossover Voting (EL-114)
9. Voter Qualification Poster (EL-115)
10. General Information on Voting Rights Under Federal Laws (EL-117)
11. Contact Information (EL-118)
12. Ward Map and Street Directory

2. The polling area did not have enough accessible parking spaces to meet the minimum ADA standards.

Solution: Every parking lot must have 1 van-accessible space, and an additional accessible space for every 25 parking spaces (1-25 spaces = 1 van-accessible space, 26-50 spaces = 1 van-accessible space and 1 accessible space).

A van-accessible space is 8' wide with an 8' access aisle, and an accessible space is 8' wide with a 5' access aisle. If your parking lot does not have accessible spaces, you can create your own by combining parking spaces with cones and additional signage from the WEC supply program.

3. The accessible entrance was not clearly marked at the door.

Solution: The accessible entrance must have signage indicating that it is the accessible entrance. You can create your own signage or order it from the WEC Supply Program.

4. The accessible entrance door required more than 8 pounds of force to open.

Solution: You can easily reduce the force required by adjusting the hinge on the door. However, if you do not have an automatic opener on your entrance door, you may want to consider hiring a greeter or placing a doorbell for someone to come and open the door for the voter. You can order doorbells from the WEC Supply Program.

5. The accessible parking sign was not posted high enough.

Solution: All accessible parking spots must be marked with signage that is between 60" and 80" above the ground. Signs cannot be set on the ground or leaning against the building. A simple solution is to order a moveable signpost or fill a plastic bucket with cement and stick a wood pole in the cement bucket. Make sure the signpost reaches the appropriate height.

Please contact the WEC Help Desk at (608)261-2028 or elections@wi.gov with questions or concerns.